

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully acknowledges receipt of the Final Office Action mailed September 9, 2006.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner (1) rejected claims 1, 2, and 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* (U.S. Patent No. 5,721,623) in view of *Stemme* (U.S. Patent No. 4,344,683); (2) rejected claims 3-5, 9-11, and 33-36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, and further in view of *Pourjavid* (U.S. Patent No. 5,883,985); (3) rejected claims 12-15 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, and further in view of *Agano* (U.S. Patent No. 6,573,507); (4) rejected claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, further in view of *Agano*, and further in view of *Pourjavid*; (5) rejected claims 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, and further in view of *Ozaki* (U.S. Patent No. 5,896,202); (6) rejected claims 22-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, further in view of *Ozaki*, and further in view of *Pourjavid*; (7) rejected claims 25, 26, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, and further in view of *Pourjavid*; (8) rejected claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*, further in view of *Pourjavid*, and further in view of *Agano*; and (9) objected to claims 29 and 51 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, Applicant proposes to amend claims 1, 10, 17, 23, 30, 32, 34, 44, 51, and 58 to improve form and/or better define the claimed invention, cancel claim 29, without prejudice or disclaimer, and add new claims 59-85. Claims 55-57 were previously canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer, in the Amendment filed December 23, 2005. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-28, 30-54, and 58-85 will remain pending. Of these claims, claims 1 and 51 are independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 1, 10, 17, 23, 30, 32, 34, 44, 51, and 58, and the addition of new claims 59-85. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 29 and 51 if rewritten in independent form. Consequently, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the features of allowable claim 29. Additionally, Applicant has rewritten allowable claim 51 in independent form. Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 51 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 2-28, 30-50, 52-54, 58, and new claims 59-85 are in condition for allowance at least due to their corresponding dependence from independent claims 1 and 51.

Applicant traverses the rejections above and respectfully requests reconsideration for at least the reasons set forth below.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) REJECTIONS

Claims 1, 2, and 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boxma* in view of *Stemme*. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the features of allowable claim 29. It is those features which the Examiner admits are not disclosed in either *Boxma*, *Stemme*, or any other prior art of record. (*Final Office Action*, p. 15, full paragraph 2). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1, 2, and 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Moreover, the Examiner admits that neither *Pourjavid*, *Agano*, nor *Ozaki* overcome the shortcomings of *Boxma* and *Stemme*. Accordingly, claims 2-28 and 30-50, and 58 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-28, 30-54, and 58-85 in condition for allowance. Applicant submits that the proposed amendments of claims 1, 10, 17, 23, 30, 32, 34, 44, 51, and 58 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully points out that the final action by the Examiner presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against Applicant's invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the Amendment would allow the Applicant to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicant submits that the entry of the amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant submits that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicant therefore requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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